

Old Slave Mart Museum: A Timeline

- **May 9-10, 1853** Thomas Ryan and his partner, James Marsh, purchase Chalmers Street lot along with two lots on Queen Street containing several buildings, creating a single, L-shaped holding.
- **April 1856** City Council passes an ordinance “to prevent sales at auctions, in the streets and places surrounding the Custom House” after July 1st
- **July 1, 1856** Ryan’s Mart officially opens using the Chalmers Street lot as a passageway to the main area of the complex. A 20-year old woman named Lucinda is the first slave to be sold.
- **February 1, 1859** Z.B. Oakes acquires the entire auction complex and uses the east wall of the German Fire Engine House to build a gated “shed” in the Chalmers Street lot for use as a sales room. Like the adjoining German Fire Engine House, the sales room has an arched façade framed by two octagonal columns made of brick.
- **November 1863** The last slave auction is held at the Mart in Chalmers Street.
- **February 1875** A tenement is constructed inside the Slave Mart, leaving the original brick, arched façade and the west wall shared by the Fire House intact, but removing the gates and replacing them with wooden boards. A second floor with a wooden balcony, an east wall made of brick, a new roof, and a chimney or flue are also added.
- **1878** The first tenants move into the building.
- **1922** The building is extended 22 feet. The wooden façade and balcony are removed, and the building is converted into an automobile salesroom.
- **1927** The Earl Fischer Auto Repair Company moves into the building.
- **1938** Miriam Wilson purchases the property and renovates the building, replacing the wooden façade and balcony.
- **1951** Ryan’s Jail is demolished.
- **1959** Miriam Wilson dies.
- **1964** Judith Wragg Chase and Louise Wragg Graves acquire the property.
- **1973** The Old Slave Mart Museum is placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

- **1987** Old Slave Mart Museum closes.
- **1988** The City of Charleston acquires the property.
- **2000** The building is renovated, removing the wooden façade and balcony and replacing them with an iron gate once again.